



SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

FIRST READING: Acts 17:22-31

A reading from Acts.

²²Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said,
“Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way.
²³For as I went through the city
and looked carefully at the objects of your worship,
I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’
What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.
²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it,
he who is Lord of heaven and earth,
does not live in shrines made by human hands,
²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything,
since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things.

²⁶“From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth,
and he allotted the times of their existence
and the boundaries of the places where they would live,
²⁷so that they would search for God
and perhaps grope for him and find him—
though indeed he is not far from each one of us.
²⁸For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’;
as even some of your own poets have said,
 ‘For we too are his offspring.’

²⁹“Since we are God’s offspring,
we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone,
an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals.
³⁰While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance,
now he commands all people everywhere to repent,
³¹because he has fixed a day
on which he will have the world judged in righteousness
by a man whom he has appointed,
and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

The word of the Lord.

or

Word of God, word of life.

FIRST READING *Areopagus = ar-ih-OP-uh-gus Athenians = uh-THEEN-ee-unz*

St. Paul is making a speech to a group of very bright people. They had altars to gods of many names. Just to play it safe, they had an altar dedicated to “an unknown god.” Paul says he is going to tell them about the God whose name they do not know. Then he proceeds to explain the God we know, from Adam and Eve right on through Jesus’ resurrection, including us in the picture. That is the good news of Easter. Give this high-powered sermon the energy and urgency it demands!

PSALMODY: Psalm 66:8-20

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 3:13-22

A reading from First Peter.

¹³Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good?

¹⁴But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed.

Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated,

¹⁵but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord.

Always be ready to make your defense to anyone

who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you;

¹⁶yet do it with gentleness and reverence.

Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned,

those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame.

¹⁷For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil.

¹⁸For Christ also suffered for sins once for all,

the righteous for the unrighteous,

in order to bring you to God.

He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit,

¹⁹in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison,

²⁰who in former times did not obey,

when God waited patiently in the days of Noah,

during the building of the ark,

in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water.

²¹And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—

not as a removal of dirt from the body,

but as an appeal to God for a good conscience,

through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

²²who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God,

with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

The word of the Lord.

or

Word of God, word of life.

SECOND READING

This is a tough little reading. The words are simple, but the thoughts are complex. That makes it doubly important to read slowly. The author says that even if one suffers for doing the right thing, one ought to hold onto Jesus as the source of hope. Jesus too suffered injustice "in order to bring you to God." The risen Christ has proclaimed (in the resurrection) the power of God to the spirits of evil. Christ has returned to heaven and rules over all. Deliver the letter as it was written: with boldness and confidence!

GOSPEL: John 14:15-21

The holy gospel according to John.

「Jesus said to the disciples:」

¹⁵“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

¹⁶And I will ask the Father,

and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever.

¹⁷This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him.

You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

¹⁸“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you.

¹⁹In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me;

because I live, you also will live.

²⁰On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

²¹They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

The gospel of the Lord.

GOSPEL

Too often the words of Jesus are read as though they were written in a script. This deeply touching sequence of teachings and promises might profit by a more hesitant delivery, allowing the assembly to sense our Lord's working at what he wishes to say next.